

# SIGNS OF METH USE

LEARN HOW TO RECOGNIZE  
THE SIGNS OF METH ABUSE.



**M**eth is a problem that impacts Americans every day. According to the Missouri State Highway Patrol, 12,088 meth labs were seized in the United States in 2012 and 3,195 labs have already been seized in 2013. The drugs are difficult to overcome because of the impact on the human body. Recognizing the signs of abuse, the symptoms of addiction and the treatment options that are available will provide the opportunity to seek help before it is too late.

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## SIGNS OF METHAMPHETAMINE USE

Recognizing the signs of substance abuse is the first step in seeking help. When a loved one exhibits signs of meth use, it may be time to start seeking assistance to overcome the challenges of a potential addiction.



## EARLY OR IMMEDIATE SIGNS OF METH USE

Getting treatment to fight against substance abuse early is a key part of recovering from the substance and living without drugs in the future. In the case of methamphetamine drugs, the signs that a loved one is using the substance show up immediately.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, hyperactivity is a common sign that occurs after the drug is used. The individual may seem to have an excess of energy and might talk more than usual. He or she may not be able to sit still for any length of time and may refuse to eat or sleep as a result of the excess energy that the drug brings out.

Although the energy is a clear sign that an individual may be using methamphetamine drugs, it is not conclusive by itself. Hyperactivity alone may indicate mental health disorders, such as ADHD or bipolar disorder, so it is important to look for additional signs of drug abuse before concluding that a loved one is using methamphetamines.

**Beyond a high level of energy, the other signs to watch for in early methamphetamine use include:**



The immediate signs of methamphetamine abuse are only the beginning and it is possible to overlook some of the early signs when a loved one begins abusing the drugs. In some cases, the substance abuse may not be noticed until after more concrete signs of a problem start developing.



## LONG-TERM SUBSTANCE ABUSE SIGNS

Methamphetamine drugs have an impact on the mind and body, so the signs of substance use and abuse increase over time. When a loved one is using and abusing methamphetamine drugs for an extended period of time, certain signs of the problem will develop.

The common long-term signs of methamphetamine use are primarily more pronounced variations of the early signs of abuse. A loved one may become increasingly paranoid or might have more obvious mood swings.

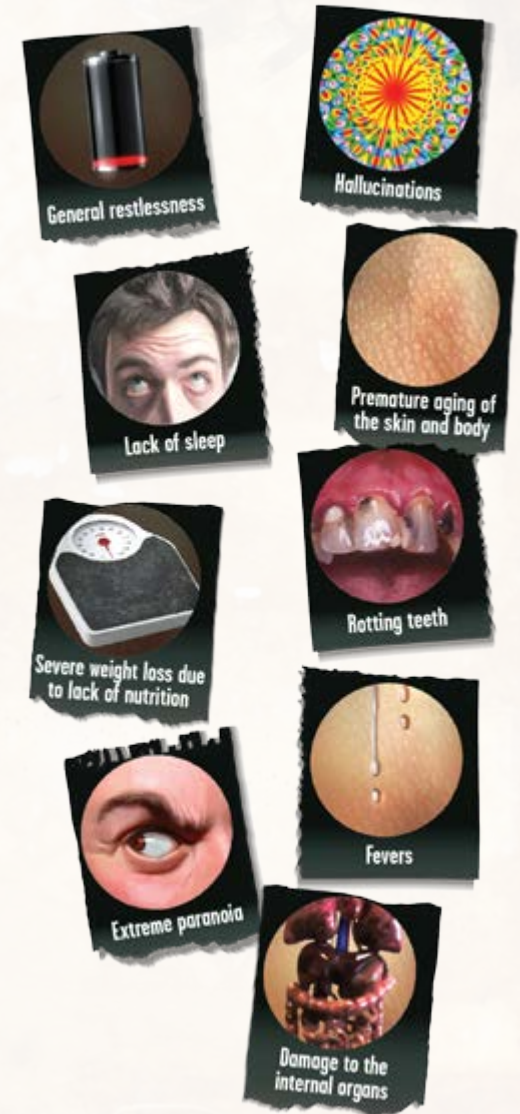
Although the long-term signs have many similarities to the signs of short-term or immediate substance abuse, certain symptoms of long-term abuse are different.

Although some of the signs may not be obvious at first glance, loved ones will notice changes in appearance and behavior as the substance abuse continues. The longer the abuse persists, the signs of methamphetamine abuse become more obvious.

Certain signs of the problem are only possible to identify in a medical setting, such as damage to the internal organs, so it may be overlooked until signs of organ damage become obvious or a medical doctor tests a loved one for those problems.

Recognizing the signs of methamphetamine use is essential to helping a loved one seek treatment. Meth use can change the body and brain, so it is essential for recovery for a loved one to obtain appropriate treatment to fight against the substance as soon as a problem is identified.

**The common signs of long-term methamphetamine use include:**



## SIGNS OF ADDICTION TO METHAMPHETAMINE DRUGS

The development of an addiction to methamphetamine drugs will differ for each individual. Although regular meth use will ultimately develop into a physical dependence on the drug, addiction might not develop immediately. Recognizing the signs of an addiction is essential to reaching out and helping a loved one seek appropriate treatment.

### SIGNS OF PHYSICAL DEPENDENCE

Although physical dependence on a drug does not necessarily mean that an addiction has developed, it is usually the first aspect of an impending or likely addiction. In many cases, addiction is the physical and mental dependence on the substance. By recognizing the physical aspects of addiction, it is easier to identify possible mental factors that are contributing to the addiction.

**The physical signs of dependence on methamphetamine drugs include:**



The physical signs of addiction are more obvious than the mental aspects of the problem. When a physical dependence develops, it is likely that the individual is also mentally dependent on the drug. Recognizing the mental signs of addiction will help determine the best course of action to overcome the drug and start living without substance abuse in the future.



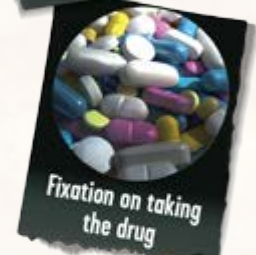
## SIGNS OF MENTAL DEPENDENCE

The signs of mental dependence on the drug are as vital as the physical signs when identifying that an addiction has developed. Since methamphetamine drugs are very addictive, it is likely that the physical and mental dependence will develop rapidly after taking the drug for the first time. Since roughly 0.7 percent of children between 12 and 17 have tried the drug according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse and roughly 5.3 percent of adults over 26 have tried methamphetamine drugs, the high risk of addiction is a concern for the country.

### The signs of mental dependence include:

- Severe insomnia and refusal to sleep, resulting in days or even weeks without sleeping
- Bouts of depression that result in taking more of the drug
- Anxiety
- Severe paranoia that gets worse over time
- Hallucinations, even when the drug is not used for a few days
- Fixation on taking the drug

Mental signs of addiction will take many forms, but primarily take the form of causing mental disturbances that result in drug-seeking behaviors. The physical cravings and the mental fixation on taking the drug result in an addiction.



## TREATING A METH ADDICTION

An addiction to methamphetamine drugs is hard to fight because of the impact on the brain. Methamphetamine changes the brain and those changes take years of living a drug-free lifestyle before it can heal.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, it takes more than two years of abstinence from the drug before dopamine transmitters in the brain begin to show signs of long-term recovery. Even after two years without the drug, an individual will not have the same reaction to dopamine as an individual who has never abused drugs.

**Despite the fact that recovery is a long-term journey, treatment is available to help overcome the addiction to methamphetamine drugs.**

12,088

METH LABS SEIZED IN 2012



## GETTING THROUGH WITHDRAWALS

Treating a methamphetamine addiction requires a detoxification period. The detoxification period will vary based on the level of addiction and individual, but Psychology Today suggests that it can take one to two weeks before the symptoms start to reduce.

**Common withdrawal symptoms that may occur include:**



Although the withdrawal symptoms are not as severe as other drugs, the insomnia that develops and the mood changes require medical supervision. The best treatment plans will provide a medically supervised detox program that provides appropriate treatment to get through the initial depression that may develop.



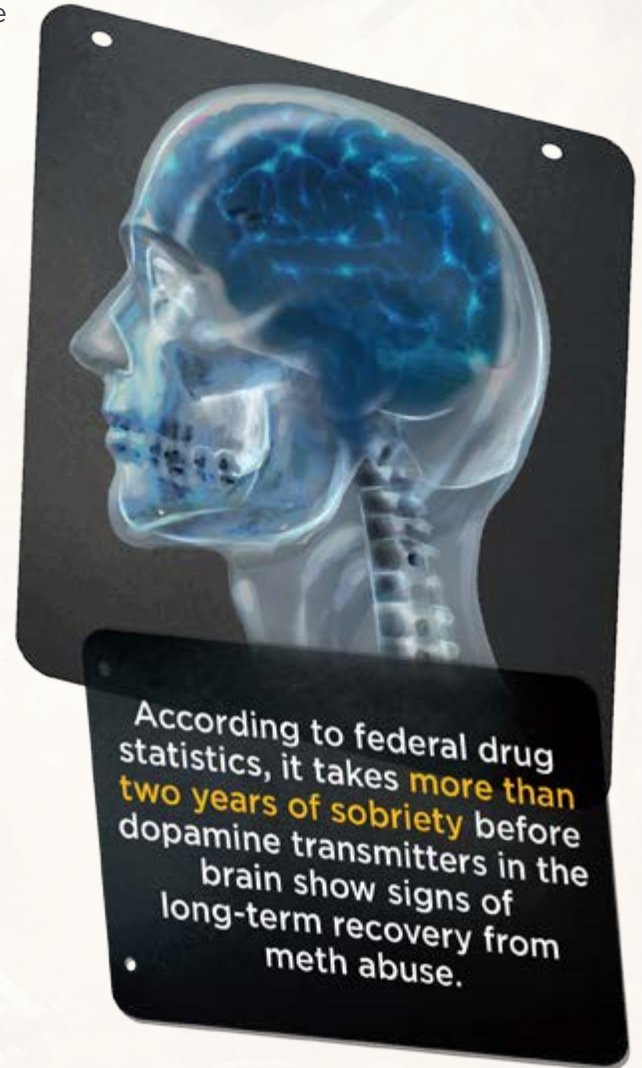


## GOING INTO COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL TREATMENT

After getting through the initial withdrawals from the drug, the next step of treatment is getting into an appropriate program. Cognitive-behavioral treatment is one of the best solutions for methamphetamine addiction because it focuses on the mental aspects of addiction.

According to the Illinois Attorney General, the purpose of cognitive-behavioral therapy is teaching an individual about his or her thought patterns. By identifying the thoughts and feelings that trigger cravings, it is possible to start planning alternative solutions to deal with those worries and methods of avoiding certain triggers.

The goal of the treatment is teaching individuals to deal with the cravings and triggers for a lifetime. The Illinois Attorney General suggests that individuals will see a sudden return of cravings for the drug after 45 to 120 days after giving up the substance. By recognizing that risk and preparing for the emotional and mental turmoil that will come during and after the initial treatment, it is possible to plan around a lifetime of recovery.



According to federal drug statistics, it takes **more than two years of sobriety** before dopamine transmitters in the brain show signs of long-term recovery from meth abuse.

## COUNSELING AND RECOVERY TOOLS

Although cognitive-behavioral therapy is the most effective approach to treating the addiction to methamphetamine drugs, treatment also includes counseling on an individual basis and as a group. The counseling allows individuals to talk about their feelings and concerns in a safe environment that is supervised so that they are able to work out the mental aspects of the addiction.

The other aspect of treatment is providing the tools an individual needs to remain drug free after leaving the program. The recovery tools range from self-awareness worksheets that individuals work on to educational tools that teach different forms of exercise, nutrition and meditation. Depending on the situation and individual, exercise programs will vary.

Counseling and recovery tools will differ for each individual based on personal needs, the addiction and the concerns that are contributing to drug-seeking behaviors. Addiction has many different causes, so finding those underlying causes and overcoming each item will help reduce the risk of a relapse in the future. Cognitive-behavioral therapy is used in conjunction with teaching recovery tools and counseling services to help improve the success rate during treatment.





## AFTERCARE

The final aspect of treating an addiction to methamphetamine drugs is following up with individuals when they are finished with the initial treatment. Recovering from addiction requires some form of aftercare. The program can vary based on the situation, but usually includes continued counseling and regularly checking-in with the program for a set amount of time.

Methamphetamine addiction is hard to fight, but it is possible with the right tools and professional guidance. By recognizing the signs of a problem and obtaining cognitive-behavioral therapy, it is possible to give up meth and live a drug-free lifestyle.